

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT NURSING MEASURES OTHER THAN DRUGS MAY BE USED (a) TO QUIETEN A RESTLESS OR DELIRIOUS PATIENT AND TO INDUCE SLEEP, (b) TO CHECK VOMITING, (c) TO INDUCE THE SKIN TO ACT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Henrietta Ballard, S.R.N., Bermondsey Hospital, Lower Road, Rotherhithe, S.E.

PRIZE PAPER.

Nursing measures to quieten a restless or delirious patient and to induce sleep depend (a) largely on the nurse and the way in which they are carried out, quietness and gentleness being essential.

Comfort is the first essential point to be dealt with. No patient, however convalescent, can sleep if uncomfortable. The sheets may be rucked, hot, and damp, and pillows, especially during delirious periods, anywhere but giving comfort. It is a good plan to strip the bed, cover patient with a fresh blanket (not one off the bed), remove garments if he is not too ill, and give a warm sponge down; dry gently, and, after putting on fresh garments, give the bed-pan, as its need may have contributed to the restlessness; cleanse patient after use if necessary, and re-make bed with fresh linen. If condition allows, lift him on to a fresh bed for the time, or re-make the one the patient is lying in. A change of macintosh will make a cooler bed, also. If a bed-rest has been in use, replace it with extra pillows; put a bolster under the knees and attach the same to head of bed by means of bandages, &c., to keep patient from slipping down. A board or bolster at the foot of bed often helps a tall person more, and gives more comfort. If the weather is cold, hot-water bottle (well protected) to extremities may help.

The room should be quiet, darkened, or the light shaded from the patient, but fresh air is essential and helpful to induce sleep.

Massage.—Gentle general massage induces sleep, especially if the nervous system is irritated.

Mouth.—The mouth becomes very dirty in many illnesses, and a source of worry to the patient unless carefully looked after. Cleanse well before giving a warm feed, with glycerine and borax and a little lemon juice, and after a warm drink patient will probably have a refreshing sleep.

Pain may be the cause of all discomfort, and, if indicated, should be relieved by fomentations, &c., locally.

Constipation is often the cause of restlessness, and a simple enema will give relief quickly.

(b) *Vomiting* may be due to irritation of the nervous system or to faulty diet, or rushing about directly after a meal, or to an anæsthetic. If the patient is of a nervous disposition, prevent worry before a meal, do not allow smells of cooking to penetrate his room until the meal appears, and insist on gentle exercise daily, but not sufficient to tire patient.

Diet may need attention, and any error to be rectified. Eggs may be too heavy cooked, but may be tolerated beaten up. The nurse must thoroughly scrutinise the diet until she discovers the offending food.

Rest immediately before and after a meal has given much relief for vomiting.

Cough may be the cause of vomiting, and should be reported to the medical attendant.

Anæsthetic vomiting may be relieved by sod. bicarb. ʒi to a pint of water, sipped occasionally.

Special points in connection with vomiting are its relation in point of time to the ingestion of food, whether preceded or accompanied by retching, pain or flatulence, and the appearance of the vomit.

(c) *Sponging* with warm water gently, and *dressing patient in warm clothes*, giving hot-water bottles and blankets and a hot drink, will usually induce the skin to act, and the patient to perspire freely. If the desired result is not produced, a hot pack may be ordered, the patient's bed being protected with macintoshes covered with blankets, and the patient rolled in two blankets wrung out of hot water, covered with a macintosh and several more blankets. Hot-water bottles may be given, and a hot drink, and the patient left in pack twenty minutes after skin begins to act. Careful watch must be kept, and if there is any indication of collapse he must be taken out of the pack at once.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. Ramsey, S.R.N., Miss Louisa Randle (Probationer Nurse), Miss Violet Ventris, S.R.N.

Miss Ventris' excellent paper considerably exceeded in length the number of words allowed, and was thus ineligible for the prize.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Describe the nursing of a patient after excision of the tongue.

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